

Message Text

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62

ACTION CU-04

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9439

UNCLAS PRETORIA 1060

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OEXC, SF

SUBJ: EDX- NOMINATION FOR FY 74 IOWA WRITERS' PROJECT:

OSWALD MTSHALI

POST NOMINATES POET OSWALD MTSHALI TO PARTICIPATE IN
FY 74 IOWA WRITERS PROGRAM. UNTIL 1969 A SCOOTER

MESSENGER FOR A JOHANNESBURG ADVERTISING FIRM, MTSHALI

HAS EMERGED AS PROMINENT BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN POET.

HIS COLLECTION OF POEMS " SOUNDS OF A COWHIDE DRUM" HAS
SOLD MORE THAN 16.000 COPIES IN SOUTH AFRICA AND IN
ENGLAND. MTSHALI APPEARS PROMINENTLY ALSO IN RECENT

COLLECTION OF BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN POETRY " TO WHOM IT
MAY CONCERN". NADINE GORDIMER IN HER BOOK " THE BLACK
INTERPRETERS" COMMENTS FAVORABLY ON MTSHALI AS

RE-ESTABLISHING BACK POETRY IN SOUTH AFRICA. MTSHALI

JOINED SUCH POETS AS W.H. AUDEN AND STEVEN SPENDER TO
READ POEMS IN QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL LONDON AS PART OF
POETRY INTERNATIONAL. HE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED AS
PART-TIME JOURNALIST FOR RAND DAILY MAIL AND BY
AEVERTIZING FIRM AS COPYWRITER. AGE: 32. SOUTH
AFRICAN CITIZEN. FLUENT ENGLISH.

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JUSTIFICATION; THROUGH HIS POEMS MTSHALI CONSIDERED

SIGNIFICANT SPOKESMAN IN DESCRIBING CONDITIONS OF
URBAN AFRICAN. WHILE POSSESSING GREAT NATURAL
TALENT, HIS CIRCUMSCRIBED LIFE EXPERIENCE RESULTING
FROM BLACK SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA, MAKE HIM
PARTICULARLY APPROPRIATE CANDIDATE FOR IOWA PROGRAM.
HURD

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